

SERMONS & ADDRESSES

DELIVERED AT

JUBILEE

OF

ERSKINE CHURCH,

MONTREAL,

APRIL, 1883.

Montreal :

PRINTED BY D. BENTLEY & CO.

1883.



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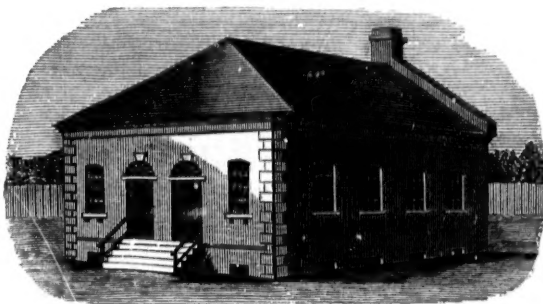
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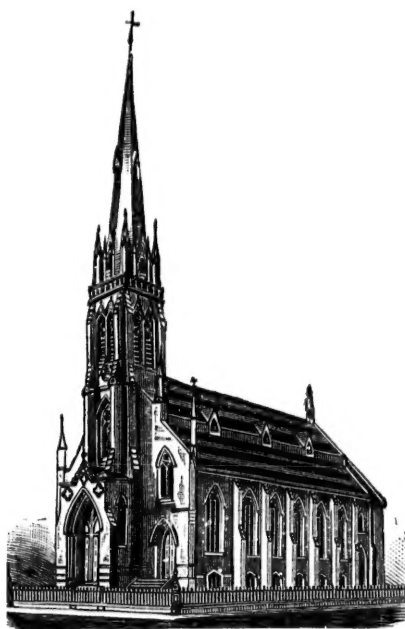
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1883.



ERSKINE CHURCH, LAGAUCHETIERE STREET
ERECTED 1833,



ERSKINE CHURCH, ST. CATHERINE STREET,
ERECTED 1865.

PREFACE.

The propriety of celebrating the Jubilee Year of Erskine Church had been introduced informally about two years ago, but the first definite action was taken at a joint meeting of the Session, Trustees, Managers and Missionary Committee held in April, 1882. Then it was proposed to raise a Jubilee thank-offering for missions of not less than five thousand dollars. This special gift is not supposed to affect our ordinary contributions for the current year. At a subsequent meeting of the above bodies the following committees were appointed :—

To collect the Thank-offering :—

DAVID BROWN, WARDEN KING, JAMES WILLIAMSON and WILLIAM YUILE.

To prepare the order of exercises for the Jubilee celebration :—

THE REV. J. S. BLACK, WARDEN KING, DAVID BROWN, JAMES WILLIAMSON and DR. AULT.

The Jubilee services were commenced on Sunday, the 29th April, being the seventeenth anniversary of the taking possession of our present place of worship.

In the morning the pastor preached the historical discourse. In the afternoon the venerable Dr. Wilkes, of Montreal, the lifelong friend of Dr. Taylor, and father-in-law of the Rev. Dr. Gibson, conducted the services, and gave interesting reminiscences of the last sixty years. At this service the pastor of the church read a letter from the Rev. Dr. J. M. Gibson, addressed to the session and congregation.

In the evening the Rev. D. J. Macdonnell, of St. Andrew's Church, Toronto, occupied the pulpit. These services were all well attended. At the morning service the minister announced that four thousand dollars of the Thank-offering had been raised and made an appeal for the other thousand. In the course of the day one thousand eight hundred dollars were contributed, fifteen hundred of this being the gift of a member of the session.

On Monday evening there was a large gathering of the members and friends of the congregation. James Williamson, Esq., the Chairman of the Board of Managers, presided. After devotional exercises, conducted by the pastor, interesting addresses were made by the Chairman, by Messrs. David Brown, James Roy, Warden King, and Andrew Robertson. The benediction was pronounced by the Rev. Dr. Stevenson, of Emmanuel Church.

Almost all of the audience adjourned to the *Conversazione* in the lecture-room of the church. Under the superintendence of the ladies, the church and lecture-room were handsomely decorated for the occasion. The following is the disposition made of the Thank-offering :—

Home Mission work in North-West.....	\$1,000.
General Home Mission Fund.....	1,500.
Foreign Mission Fund.....	1,000.
French Evangelization.....	500.
St. Mark's Church, Montreal.....	572.
Taylor Church, Montreal.....	604.
Balance to Home Mission work in the city.	

All these particulars may be well known to us at present, but this pamphlet is issued with a view to those who shall come after us, and who may be interested in the proceedings of this Jubilee, and in the fifty years of church life and work which it celebrates.

J. S. B.

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Ministers of Erskine Church

SINCE ITS ORGANIZATION.

REV. WM. TAYLOR, D.D. . 1833 — 1876

REV. J. M. GIBSON, D.D. . 1864 — 1874

REV. J. S. BLACK, 1874 —

— Members of Session. —

1883.

Moderator,—THE REV. J. S. BLACK.

Session Clerk,—JOHN BRODIE.

Treasurer of Poor Fund,—WARDEN KING.

LAIRD PATON.

DAVID ROSS KERR.

A. C. HUTCHISON.

JAMES GILL.

WM. ROBB.

C. W. DAVIS.

R. A. BECKET.

DAVID YUILE.

JAS. RODGER.

REV. R. H. WARDEN.

Board of Trustees.

1883.

President, DAVID BROWN, Senr.

Secretary, ANDREW ROBERTSON.

WARDEN KING.

JOHN HUTCHISON.

JONATHAN HODGSON.

Board of Management.

1883.

President,—JAMES WILLIAMSON.

Vice-President,—JOHN MILLEN.

Treasurer,—J. R. LOWDEN.

Financial Secretary,—JAMES BROWN.

Recording Secretary,—P. LAINO.

Managers.

F. BRUNDAGE.

DR. AULT.

J. M. KIRK.

ARCHIBALD MCINTYRE.

W. C. JARVIS.

WM. WAUGH.

T. E. HODGSON.

WM. ANGUS.

C. T. CHRISTIE.

D. McTAGGART.

J. S. ARCHIBALD.

JAS. PATON.

Auditors.—WM. YUILE AND W. C. JARVIS.



Historical Discourse by the Rev. J. S. Black, Minister of Erskine Church.

"The Lord hath been mindful of us."—Psalin 115: 12.

In the hour of Israel's signal deliverance, Samuel took a stone and set it between Mizpah and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." This congregation can look back upon fifty years of varied fortunes. Shall we to-day raise our Ebenezer? Can we, in faith and in gratitude, declare "hitherto hath the Lord helped us"? When God was dealing with the children of Israel, he reminded them again and again of what they were to tell their children when these children were to ask the meaning of certain customs and observances. Have we any testimony to bear to the faith and zeal of those who have gone before us? Have we any message of hope and good cheer to those who shall come after us? Can we take up the praiseful and grateful words of the sweet singer, and say, "The Lord hath been mindful of us"? The Lord's guiding and keeping can be seen as we review the past. Let no unworthy thoughts of self-complacency, or of vain glory have place in our hearts this day. If we dare number the people, let it be done as an aid to faith, a call to praise, and an encouragement to service.

The services of this day possess peculiar interest to all members of the congregation. The large number of members who have been admitted by certificate from other churches reminds us that we have many brethren beloved among us whose connection with this congregation is of comparatively recent date. Some of you look back with fond affection on the Sunday Schools where you went long ago, and on the ministers and churches associated with the hallowed memories of the time when first you sat at the

Lord's Table. Ever cherish such sacred reminiscences. They are your surest possessions, your most enduring treasures. But you are not, therefore, the less interested in the congregation of your adoption. The visible church is the most liberal institution on earth. She does not demand years of probation, nor does she relegate the new-comer to an inferior position. Every one who loves the Lord Jesus Christ is invited to share our toils and our joys ; to help bear the common burdens, and to be an equal partaker of all the honors and immunities of our Zion. This is the church of your adoption ; but your children have been baptized in it. It is theirs by birthright. By your own spiritual rights and privileges, and by your children's birthright, you are interested in the services of this day.

No words of mine are needed to prove how dear the annals of this church must be to the great body of its membership. You, my brethren, are bearing the burden and heat of the day. You have grown up in this church, or you have been so many years attached to it that it has become a home to you. The praise of its successes and the reproach of its failures are largely yours.

But the proceedings of this day of celebration must be of special interest to the old and to the young. To the old, because they can look back over this half century that has gone, and recall the way in which we have been led. It is true that there are only two left (Mr. and Mrs. David Brown) in our membership to-day who took part in the formation of the congregation, and sat down at our first communion ; but not a few can go back to very near that time, while there is a goodly number of those who have been thirty years and upwards on the roll. There is a mingling of sorrow and joy in all retrospect ; but even the sorrow of this kind is "sweet sorrow."

To the young—to the boys and girls, to the young men and young women—of the congregation, this semi-centennial should be of most interest. Many of you are the children of those who had much to do with the up-building of this church. "The glory of children are their fathers," says the wise man. You are the

baptized children of the church, and in the days that are quickly coming, we hope to see you by God's grace, becoming pillars in the house of your God. Erskine Church is a monument to the consecrated zeal and energy of young people. A young minister gathered some stout-hearted young people round about him, and the foundations were laid. Many of our office-bearers are coming to the "sere and yellow leaf of age," but some of them were very young men indeed when they first assumed office. Very few of the original band are in the land of the living to-day ; but when another fifty years have passed and this church celebrates its centennial, some of you young people will be living to tell the story of this day. Those who are now between eight years and thirty years of age will then be between fifty-eight and eighty years. I put the limit at eight years, because those under eight cannot be supposed to remember much, and I put the other limit at thirty, because so very few live to exceed the four score years. At present there are about three hundred between those two ages in this church. An accomplished actuary* says that the probability is that of this three hundred, one hundred and twenty will be living to celebrate the centennial anniversary of this church. Of this goodly company only six score will remain, and all the rest will have gone over to the countless multitude of the dead. Let us be solemnized by this truth, and let our prayer be that the retrospect of the past fifty years may help us so to live, and so to labor, that the coming fifty years may be "years of the right hand of the Most High."

We have about one hundred and fifty members in full communion under thirty years of age. Of this number about fifty will live until the centennial of this congregation comes round. How many will be in this city and in this congregation at that time is another question. At first glance, it appears as if such a celebration as this of to-day was of peculiar and special interest to the old ; but is it not true, in a most important sense, it is a day for the young ? The retrospect of age is the outlook of youth. Memory is the portion of the aged believ hope is the heritage of the young.

*Henry J. Johnston.

In 1792, that is, ninety-one years ago, St. Gabriel Street Church was opened for public worship. This was the first Protestant place of worship in this city. The Episcopalians had worship, but it was in the old Jesuit's Chapel, the use of which Lord Dorchester granted them. St. Gabriel St. Church was in connection with the Church of Scotland. But in the motherland of Presbyterianism, the voluntary movement, under the lead of such men as the Erskines, Wilson of Perth, Moncrieff of Abernathy, and Fisher of Kinclaven, had secured many earnest advocates and adherents, and it had its friends in this city. In 1804, or twelve years after the opening of St. Gabriel Street Church, St. Andrew's congregation was formed, their first church edifice being finished in 1807. This congregation, which of late years has been so closely identified with the Scotch Establishment, was in the beginning a voluntary congregation, ministered to by the Rev. Robert Easton, who was a Scotchman, and a minister of the Burgher Secession Church. After the union of the scattered Scottish voluntaries, in 1820, Mr. Easton and his congregation considered themselves to be in connection with the Associate Reformed Synod of Scotland. This connection, however, was never formally acknowledged by the Synod, and possibly it was never formally sought by the congregation. In 1820, when Mr. Easton proposed to retire from his ministerial labors, the congregation resolved to procure a minister from the Church of Scotland, "and none else." This led to a division of the church; but in the separation the national line was more prominent than the denominational, and the American Presbyterian Church was formed in 1823.

Thus, after twenty years of existence as a congregation, the voluntary movement in Scotland had, strictly speaking, no representation in this city. News travelled slowly in those days, but when at length the tidings of the doings of 1823-24 did reach the other side of the Atlantic, the leaders of the United Associate Synod must have had food for reflection in thus letting a promising congregation slip through their fingers. Meanwhile the staunch Voluntaries, the men whose fathers had suffered for their

principles, the men to whom their ecclesiastical position was a matter of conscience, found themselves in an anomalous condition. Their church had split in two parts. By casting in their lot with the one party, there was a certain sacrifice of nationality, and by espousing the fortunes of the other party, they sacrificed cherished principles. Then the emigrants who came from Scotland to Montreal, from 1820 to 1830, and who had belonged to the United Secession Church in their native land, made common cause with those who had literally come to grief between the two churches—American and Scotch, and many a letter was sent home complaining of the religious destitution in which they felt themselves here.

In 1820 the Scottish Voluntaries had been busy with their own nearly accomplished Union, and in the multitude of affairs to be attended to, may well be excused for their momentary neglect of their Colonial interests. Now they were alive to the importance of the field, and resolved at once to undertake a mission to the Canadas. In 1832 they sent out several missionaries. All went to Upper Canada except the Rev. Mr. Robertson, who remained in Montreal. He labored for a few months, and then was suddenly cut off by the cholera. The small company that he had gathered were disheartened, but not dispersed by this calamity. They obtained the services of Mr. Shanks, a licentiate, throughout the following Winter, and in the meantime renewed their request to the parent church for a minister. In 1833 the Synod sent out the Rev. Mr. Murray and Dr. Taylor. Their instructions were to remain in Montreal at least one month, and to organize a congregation, if possible, and to give such congregation an opportunity of inviting one of them to become their pastor. The person so invited was authorized to remain and assume the pastoral charge without further ceremony. The congregation was formed on the 20th June, with seventy-five members. Elders were elected, and the ordinance of the Lord's Supper was administered on the third Sabbath of July. One hundred and five sat down at that communion. On the Monday following a congregational meeting was held for the purpose of

calling a minister, for up till this time the two young ministers had been working together. The choice fell upon Dr. Taylor, as we call him, although he was not Doctor then. Let me here state that if I do not dwell much upon the life and character of the man who gave so much of his life work to this church and congregation, it is not from lack of will on my part, or from dearth of merit on his, but simply because, at his death, seven years ago, I had ample opportunity to speak of his life, and worth, and works, and as this took permanent shape in the *in memorium* pamphlet which was then published, it is not necessary to repeat here what was then said.

The congregation met in Bruce's School-room, in McGill street, but this proving too small, the American Presbyterian Church was secured at an hour when the regular congregation did not use it. Meanwhile the original structure on the Lagau-chetiere street site was commenced in the spring of 1834. It was a hard struggle. The congregation was not large, and for the most part it was composed of those who were just beginning life in the country of their adoption. Contributions were received from the parent church, and from friends in the United States. But the dreaded cholera broke out again, creating universal alarm, and putting almost an entire stop to business of every kind. Dr. Taylor writes : " For this reason we were unable to complete the plan which was adopted at the commencement, and were thankful to cover it with the roof, after raising the walls to the height of one story."

In "Hochelaga Depicta," published in 1839, we have a description of the first edifice. It says : " The church is a plain, but substantial building. It was intended to be two stories high, but the return of the cholera occasioned the work to be hastily finished. Its appearance suffers by the diminution of its height, but it is a commodious place of worship, and will seat conveniently about 480 persons." * * * The site may, in one respect, be deemed unfavorable, as being at too great a distance from the city." Lagau-chetiere street was at too great a distance from the city in 1839, and where we now worship was away out into the country.

This congregation was cradled in hard times. Almost immediately after the completion of the building, the troubles which preceded the Rebellion of 1837 broke out, and the disturbed state of affairs brought the finances of the church to such a low ebb that it was a matter of serious consideration to Dr. Taylor whether he would be able to remain.

Since we commenced printing our annual reports, and putting them in pamphlet form, it has been an easy matter to keep the record of our congregational life ; but we had no such reports then. The registers of baptisms, marriages, and burials are in excellent preservation and complete, but some of our early records are not so full as they might be, and some have disappeared. Curiously enough we have a very excellent abstract of these first five years. In the fall of 1838 the Presbytery of Upper Canada of the United Secession Church, sent eleven queries to the church in Montreal, having to do with the finances from the beginning. The Committee of Management appointed John Anderson and James Cochrane a sub-committee to prepare answers to those questions. We have this sub-committee's report, and we may rely upon it as being an accurate statement. I give this interesting document, making but one change, namely, that of converting the £ s. d. of the period into dollars and cents, so that the figures may be more readily understood. Let us also keep in mind that these questions are answered five years and three months after the founding of the church.

(1)—How much has been expended on the church and church property, since the formation of the congregation ?

Exclusive of the church lot, purchased for \$2,000, on which nothing has been paid, except the interest of the same, for four years to the first of April last, there has been expended the sum of \$4,578, interest of the ground included.

(2)—How much debt remains at this date ?

Seven hundred and eighty dollars (\$780) exclusive of the \$2,000 dollars above stated, and also the sum of \$494, due our pastor to the first of the present month.

(3)—What number of seats let ?

Two hundred and sixty-eight sittings, or nearly three-fifths of the whole.

(4)—Number of seats unlet ?

One hundred and eighty sittings, or two-fifths of the whole.

(5)—Average rate of sittings ?

Ten shillings per annum.

(6)—Total amount of seat rents ?

The seat rents, since formation, amount to \$2,707.

(7)—The total subscription for building church, &c.?

The whole amount collected for building the church :

In Montreal and vicinity.....	\$2,345.00
Collected by the Rev. W. Taylor in the	
United States.....	416.00
Donation received from Scotland.....	64.00
Received from the United Secession Mission-	
ary Society, being an allowance of one	
year's stipend to Rev. W. Taylor.....	474.00
Taken from the Church Fund.....	501.00
Amount paid.....	\$3,800.00

(8)—Total stipend since formation ?

Total stipend since formation, five and a quar-

ter years..... 3,150 00

On which is paid..... 2,656.00

Amount due..... \$494.00

(9)—Total stipend paid year ending 1st January, 1838 ?

The sum of \$417.

(10)—Amount of collections on Sabbath since formation ?

One thousand two hundred and sixty-one dollars, exclusive of extraordinary collections for the payment of debt, and included in the above.

(11)—Average weekly collections last year ?

Four dollars and thirty-one cents.

When James Cochrane and John Anderson drew up this careful report, they did not know that it was to have a hearing, not only before the Presbytery of Upper Canada, but also before their own Church and congregation, after a lapse of forty-five years. We have thus given us, in the outward shape of a matter of fact report, a touching narration of the early struggles of this congregation, which were alike honorable to the pastor and to the people. The Presbytery of Upper Canada and the Home Church did not lose sight of the Montreal congregation. In 1842 the Synod instructed the Rev. A. Kennedy, of Lachute, the Rev. A. Lowden, of New Glasgow, and the Rev. Wm. Taylor, of Montreal, to form themselves into the Presbytery of Lower Canada. A meeting was held in Lagauchetiere Street Church for the purpose. For reasons which we need not relate, they have become so very small in the distance of the passing years, Dr. Taylor and his elder declined entering into the Presbytery, and Messrs. Kennedy and Lowden, with their elders, bravely went forward and formed the Presbytery without them. This condition of affairs continued for three years. Of course the isolation was not felt very keenly, because minister, session and congregation had had to get along for so many years in their ecclesiastical loneliness, that all parties must have become pretty well accustomed to it. Better feelings prevailed, however, and in 1845 the session of our church joined the Presbytery. It was then a Presbytery of three ministers and three elders. Just two years after this event, that happy union took place in Scotland which brought the scattered voluntaries together into that "United Presbyterian Church," which ever since 1847 has played so important a part in the religious development of Scotland, and in the broader field of Foreign Missions. The churches in Canada heartily agreeing with and rejoicing in this union at home, followed the fortunes of the United Church, and assuming the new name, were known as United Presbyterian until the next Union, in 1861. This congregation and its minister took a prominent part in the formation of the Canada Presbyterian Church, by the Union of the United Presbyterian and Free Churches, and Dr. Taylor was the first Moderator of the United Church. In the

Providence of God this church is also linked to the grandest Union of all—that of 1875—by the circumstance of the first General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada being held in this house. Dr. Taylor had this last Union much at heart. He said to me he was glad to have lived to see it. If immortals behold the affairs of earth, he has joy now in the knowledge that this Union of eight years ago has brought forth much good, and that none of the evils which fearful souls prophesied have come to pass.

I do not intend to follow the history of this congregation as minutely in all its details as I have in the first five years. Time forbids. Moreover, to-morrow evening respected brethren who have had much to do with the life and prosperity of Erskine Church, will speak to you of their own personal knowledge. I call your attention to the more salient points of our chronicles.

The growth of this congregation has been slow and sure. Dr. Taylor, in his anniversary sermon of 1876, one of the last sermons that he preached, says: "The course of the congregation has generally been one of progress. This remark may be extended to the whole history of the congregation, from its commencement to the present day. Its course has been one of gradual increase, never impulsive, but steady, like leaven in the meal." A few figures of the decades will forcibly exhibit the justness of this quotation:

In 1834.....	125	members.
1844.....	200	"
1854.....	270	"
1864.....	400	"
1874.....	430	"

But the number was greater (550) before the formation of the Stanley Street Church. The end of this year will give us from 520 to 540 of membership. The growth from the commencement of our church until the union of 1861, was natural and to be expected. It was the only representative of the voluntary movement and principle in the city. Then for many years there

was no increase in the number of churches. St. Gabriel Street, St. Andrew's, and the American preceded Erskine Church. St. Paul's dates from the same period. For thirty years, with the exception of the building of the Free Church, in Cotte street, there was no addition to the Presbyterian family, so far as the number of churches is concerned.

The census of 1861 gives the number of Presbyterians in this city of all kinds as 8,140. The census of 1881 gives the number as 11,597. In twenty years there is an increase of 3,457, and to accommodate this increase not only have St. Paul's, Cotte Street, the American and Erskine Churches moved into buildings of much greater seating capacity, but Knox, Chalmers, St. Matthew's, St. Mark's, St. Joseph Street, Taylor and Cote des Nieges, Churches, have been built. The growth of the last twenty years of this, and also of our sister churches of the Presbyterian family, is surprising. There is only one explanation. In 1861 there must have been a far larger number of nominal Presbyterians who were not in the habit of attending church than there are to-day. Twenty years ago there was one Presbyterian Church to 1,358 professedly Presbyterian inhabitants. To-day there is one for every 725. With these figures before us, we would expect a smaller membership to each church, but such is not the case. The rolls of the half dozen original churches are larger to-day than they were in 1861.

The spiritual life and work of the church was commenced with energy and carried forward, so far as the observance of the means of grace was concerned, with exemplary regularity. The communion has been dispensed every quarter since the opening of the church. The Sabbath School Society was organized immediately after the formation of the church, and the Bible Class not long after the Sunday School.

Though poor and struggling, the old Lagauchetiere street church always tried to aid others. We find in the old records of the session, evidence of the care of the poor, and of the burial of the dead by the church. The city charities were not forgotten,

and there were occasional appeals for other missionary and benevolent objects. It was not however, until 1858, twenty-five years ago, that the Missionary Society was organized on its present basis. In that year the income of the Society was \$260.

In 1866, the year in which the congregation moved into this church, we are credited with \$2,146 for missionary and benevolent objects. The following year \$7,117 was given, and we have never got lower than \$4,300 since that date. During the seventeen years in this building, we have raised about \$110,000 for missionary and benevolent objects, or an average \$6,500 per year. These figures do not include subscriptions to Young Men's Christian Association, Bible Society, &c., nor do they embrace public benefactions of a miscellaneous character. They are strictly confined to monies raised in the congregation, for the Missionary and Benevolent Schemes of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. The sudden increase in the giving for missions on entering upon the possession of this church, is not to be accounted for by any corresponding increase of membership, for such was not the case. Nor was it a sudden and exceptional effort, for the giving has been sustained. The differences in the amounts from year to year do not indicate any fluctuating in the spirit of giving, but are caused by occasional special appeals for particular objects. May we not account for it in part, by the general stimulus given to the congregation by its moving into the larger and more commodious place of worship. There is a selfishness that spends all upon itself, and there is a niggardliness which spends neither upon self nor others. The congregation that devises liberal things for itself, usually abounds in liberality to the schemes of the church. Nor should we forget on this occasion to recognize the services of the office-bearers and collectors of the Missionary Society. Theirs is a task not invariably of the pleasantest, and yet the results demonstrate that their work was done faithfully and perseveringly. The ladies did their full share in the work of collecting. Not only in this, but also in the Sunday School, in the Dorcas Society, in the "Ladies' Aid," and other departments of christian activity, has woman's work been a power for good in this church.

We are now in the fifth year of the method of sustaining our ordinary revenue by weekly voluntary offerings, commonly known as the envelope system. This was, in part, a return to the practice of this church in the earlier years of its existence. Hitherto it has proved successful. It is capable of yet greater development. But above all, we value it as being the true ideal of a christian church, in which wealth can give of its abundance, and from which poverty is not driven away, or compelled to remain at the sacrifice of self-respect.

Everyone conversant with the working of our Presbyterian polity knows that, next to the pulpit ministrations, the success of a congregation depends upon the discretion and zeal of the Kirk Session, and of the Board of Managers, to whom is intrusted the finances of the congregation. Our present condition is the best tribute of respect which we can pay to those brethren who have served in those capacities. This has not always been an easy task, for the church has had its dangers and its difficulties. Dr. Taylor, in 1874, devoted his anniversary sermon to those hard places of the past. I follow his narrative, but I have not space to quote his words in full. In 1836 the great temperance question was agitated, and the minister of this church took a firm stand on the side of total abstinence. The result was that a considerable number left the church. Their loss was the more keenly felt because the church was poor and feeble, and some of these men had means. Very soon after, a few very worthy men left the church at the other extreme of opinion. They were offended because non-connection in any form with the traffic in strong drink was not made a *sine qua non* of communion. Dr. Taylor strenuously resisted this movement. Need we say that he has been justified by the logic of the years.

The next great break that took place in the congregation was in 1844, in connection with the disruption in the Established Church of Scotland, which had taken place in the previous year. Several of the members thought it to be their duty to join themselves to the Free Church movement. Of those who then left Dr. Taylor remarks: "The number of those who left us at that time

was not so great as on the former occasion, but their value was much greater, and their loss was, therefore, the more keenly felt."

In 1852 great excitement prevailed with regard to the Unitarian views advocated by several individuals. The result was that the names of some of the members of the church were removed from the roll. There was a good deal of talk at that time of the right of private judgment, intolerance, and so forth. No doubt in the heat of debate both parties may have said things which, in calmer moments, they would be willing to have unsaid, but, looking at these events through the softening perspective of the thirty years that have elapsed since their occurrence, we cannot see wherein the Session of the church could have acted otherwise than they did.

We do not reckon the formation of new congregations, such as Chalmers Church, St. Joseph Street, etc., as being any injury to the older churches. For the time being they take a few of the members, but this is the law of growth, and to be rejoiced at with all our heart. Very different, however, was it in the case of the formation of Stanley Street Congregation. At the same meeting of Presbytery at which Dr. Gibson was loosed from his charge, our friends of Stanley street were formed into a church. I mention this to remind you that it was an accomplished fact before I had any connection with this congregation, and therefore I can speak without any personal feeling. I am the more able to do this because my relations, alike with the ministers and people of Stanley Street Church, have always been of the pleasantest. True, our church is as full as it was before, and the congregation is perhaps as large as any one man can minister to. We also rejoice in the success which has attended this latest born of our church. But division for such a cause is always to be deprecated, and it would be a triumph of christian life were the two to come together again.

The one-story edifice of the first years of the church was enlarged and improved on two different occasions, and then, in 1847, was substantially rebuilt, and made a very commodious place of worship. It soon became evident that the interests of

the congregation demanded another change, and this house was built. Seventeen years to-day, on a twenty-ninth of April, it was opened. Three years ago the last of the debt on the church was paid. It might have been paid sooner, but during '71, '72, '73 and '74 little or nothing was done towards its diminution, the total of these four years being \$1,968. But during these four years over fifteen thousand dollars was contributed by this church towards the erection of the Presbyterian College. I think we may safely assert that the paying of our own debt rather helped than hindered our giving to other good works.

During all these years it may be said that this church has had but one completed pastorate, and in this respect it stands alone among all the churches in the city. From 1833 till 1876 Dr. Taylor was the minister of this church. I have already given my reason for not saying anything about one of whom so much might be said. During ten of those years, 1864-1874, he had as his colleague J. M. Gibson, now Dr. Gibson. I am sure it is not necessary for me to speak his praise. After an absence of nine years he is still remembered, not only by the members of this church, but also by the christian community generally. His eminent success, first in Chicago and now in London, proves the correctness of the high opinion of him that obtained in this his first charge.

Of the nine years of the present pastorate, it is not for me to say much. It commenced when this church lost at one stroke, so to speak, one-fourth of its membership. It, in the beginning experienced some of the hardest times in the commercial world that this city has known, and yet our total income for those nine years has been greater than that of the nine years which preceded, all of which save one were spent on this church, and during all of which this church had the services of two ministers. During these nine years over four hundred have been added to the church. I say these things for our encouragement. We have good reason to give thanks this day. We can appropriate the words of our text and say, "the Lord hath been mindful of us." But, my friends, we who remain are not the only interested participants in

this service. There is a cloud of witnesses. About two thousand names have been on the communion roll of the church since its commencement. A little over five hundred are with us this day. About four hundred have passed away from earth, many, let us hope, to join the church above. There are about a thousand who have been on our roll for a time. Some of these too have passed over to the innumerable multitude of the dead, but many remain scattered up and down this Dominion, in the United States, and in the Old Country. I have never yet been in any city of the Dominion where some one did not introduce himself or herself as a former member or adherent of this church. I could gather a nice little company in Toronto, and another in Manitoba, of those who have left during my pastorate. Now we helped or hindered every one of these brethren. I am my brother's keeper. Those to whom in God's providence is given permanent residence in a congregation, should be deeply impressed with their responsibility for those who in the same all-wise Providence, tarry with the church for a little while. But we too are passing away. Ever changing—coming and going. Yet the church remains. Ministers, elders, communicants, drop out of the ranks one by one, but the table still is spread. Of the four hundred members who were actually present in this city when I came here, I have buried seventy. At first sight it seems scarcely credible, the coming and the going has been so gradual. But of many of these seventy it is my blessed privilege to testify that the Lord was mindful of them. This is to us the end of one period and the beginning of another. We raise our stone of remembrance, and say, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." In many respects we cannot expect as much progress in the next fifty years as we have had in the past. There is a limit to church membership, in the size of the house of worship, and also in the ability of anyone to minister to more than a given number of families. But in prayerfulness—in loyalty to our Zion—in generous activity in all good works—there is no limit to our progress. Let us then, in God's name, arise and go forward. Our only danger now is the danger of being too well off of having too little to do. Let us go forward a church militant, until we join the church triumphant.

Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Wilkes, Montreal.

"We have thought of thy loving kindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple,"—
Psalm 43: 9.

You commemorate to-day the fiftieth anniversary of this Christian Church. It is a day of rejoicing, a jubilee of gladness. You bless God for the past, and take courage for the future. Boasting is excluded, for all the good things are of the Lord, but we may rejoice even with great joy: "The joy of the Lord is our strength." This Psalm is jubilant, as are its two companions, which precede it. Through them all runs the grand idea of a personal God, of whom are all things, who is mighty and loving, and who is the stay and deliverer of His people. He is thought of, and appealed to, and trusted in amid all the circumstances of trial and peril described. It is suggested, and this suggestion has probability on its side, that these inspired compositions were called forth on the occasion reported, 2 Chron.: 20th chap. The King heard of the assembling in martial array of the men of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, their purpose being to come up against the cities of Judah, and take them for a prey, "to despoil and make desolate." Jehoshophat summoned the people to fast in penitence for their sins, and to cry unto the Lord God of their fathers for help. His striking and beautiful prayer is recorded. The answer came immediately by the mouth of the prophet. They were gathered in the house of the Lord, a great congregation. The Spirit of the Lord, by the voice of Jahaziel said: "Thus saith the Lord unto you: Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's. " And Jehoshophat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before the Lord, worshipping the Lord. And the Levites. stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel." We learn also that on the morrow he appointed "singers unto the Lord," who went

out before the army, that they might "praise the beauty of holiness," and say "Praise the Lord ; for His mercy endureth forever." Well might the words of our text be a portion of a song celebrating the deliverance which was then achieved. "We have thought of thy loving kindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple."

Though interesting, and in some respects helpful in meditation, yet this suggestion does not affect the general bearing of these Psalms, or of this verse of the last of them. They are for all time, and these words seem quite appropriate to the present occasion. In thus using them, I ask you to notice with some attention that the matter is one of **THOUGHT**. The power of thinking is one of the features of the Divine image in man. God's thoughts are everywhere expressed—the whole universe is vocal with them. It is one vast system of symbols of thought, addressing every sense of man, and pressing their significance upon every power of his mind. Thought is everywhere, it is universal as existence. "Day unto day uttereth speech, night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." Thought precedes its symbol and expression ; hence, all this vast frame of universal nature was, and is, God's thought. It is the same throughout the immense and complicated system of Providence. This grand ordering of the vast and the minute, of the complex and the simple in all human affairs, is the mighty working of His thought, of whora we sing :

" One eternal thought moves on
Thy undisturbed affairs."

"How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God," says the Psalmist. "How great is the sum of them ! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand ; when I awake, I am still with thee." This grand distinction is God's gift to us. His thoughts are revealed to our thought ; thus only can we know God. Our mental and moral being is founded on this fact. God's thoughts are made known to our thought, and as we exercise aright this great power, do we learn more and more of Him.

But alas ! how sadly we come short, and grievously misuse this distinguished faculty ! How little enlightened, consecutive, earnest thinking we do ! Our minds are ever active, but what vain thoughts crowd themselves along our mental path, followed often by evil thoughts. Is it not so that we now and again dream away precious hours, which should be given to healthy and inspiring thought ? Surely here is a call to rigid, persistent self-discipline. God has endowed us with the power, and he has given to us the means of regulating our thoughts. We may command them successfully when they are brought into close contact with those which are Divine. He said to Israel : "I know the thoughts which I think towards you, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end." We have to exercise ourselves unto godliness, by becoming intimately acquainted with these thoughts. The field of good and wise thinking is boundless in extent, and rich in fruitfulness. This beautiful world supplies endless variety and a magnificent domain for the exercise of thought. God speaks His thoughts everywhere. The government of physical nature, and of the creatures who are its living occupants, and, above all, of man in his personal and social relations to God and his fellows, is an exhaustless mine of mental and spiritual wealth to every faithful explorer and worker. And observe, there is no restriction as to class in the field or mine of thought ; neither exalted station nor plenteous wealth is needed ; the poorest and the humblest have here a fair field, and will have impartial treatment. God has made the human mind free of the universe ; no one save Himself can call you to account for your thinking. Surely with such an endowment, and with such a field for its exercise, we do grievous wrong to ourselves to neglect that exercise. Aye, and we wrong the gracious Giver, by practically misusing His gifts.

We must not omit the mention of another part of this boundless field, though time admits not of extended remarks. The broad tableland of good and wise thinking is yet loftier on which appears *the Son of God*, who reveals the Father, as regarded God-ward and man-ward. The Divine-human and the Human-divine Saviour, redeeming men to God by His blood, sanctifying

them by His spirit, interceding for them at the Throne, protecting and helping them in all their exigencies by an ever-present almighty power, and conducting them to His heavenly kingdom. Let anyone be linked to Him by personal repentance, faith and obedience, and he is thus saved. The Kingdom of Christ on earth and in heaven is a theme for highest and best of human thought. It comprehends all the grand purposes of Divine wisdom and love, which have been so far unfolded to us, and which embrace all the ages and the whole earth. May I suggest in passing, that we may not excuse ourselves on the plea of lack of time, for neglecting such thought. That which we waste in *vain* thoughts, to say nothing of those which are wrong, would give us ample time. Besides, all our legitimate thinking in relation to the affairs of the present life may be made helpful in this direction. If "whatsoever we do in word or deed were done in the name of the Lord Jesus," our ordinary thinking would be more than tinged by the glow of what is sacred, and would minister to the spiritual. Let not lassitude of body, or sin rob us of this blessing.

We have thought of thy loving kindness, O God, in the midst of Thy temple. The New Testament Church is the antitype of the Jewish Temple, as that name is employed here ; thus we will think of that loving kindness to this church, and through it to the community surrounding it. The precise idea is—we have imaged, we have realized, we have bodied forth that loving kindness. Some are present who, like myself, can do this as a matter of personal reminiscence ; but the majority of you have to form the image, and to body forth the facts through the medium, and by the help of testimony. Your respected pastor is necessarily among the majority ; yet, as he has access to documents and to the remembrances of the elders, and has now been for a number of years in warm sympathy with his flock, and their successful Shepherd under Christ, he was enabled to give to you a historical discourse filled with proofs of the loving kindness of the Lord. It falls to my lot to speak from personal recollection, observation, and experience. You are, for the most part, aware that I have known this city for a period of sixty years, and throughout these

years have had more or less relation to the religious movements among its people. This fact affords me unusual opportunity for comparison, and for tracing the direction and power of Christian influence. It so happened that the Congregational denomination and the United Secession Church entered upon their work in this city nearly simultaneously. In August, 1831, on the quay at Greenock, Scotland, I bade farewell to two Congregational ministers and their families, who were on board the good ship "Favorite," Captain Allan, one of them for Montreal, the other for Upper Canada. The following year a similar event occurred in connection with the U. S. Church, Upper Canada being the appointed sphere of one, and Montreal that of the other. I spent the summer of 1832 in Canada, chiefly in the western portion of it; found my friend, Mr. Miles, and his congregation removed from the school-room of the late Mr. Bruce, in McGill street, to a temporary home in College street, and learned that Mr. Robertson had died soon after his arrival. That terrible pestilence, the cholera, had, during the summer, decimated the population of the city. In 1833, as you have been already told, Mr. Taylor arrived, and he and his friends occupied the same school-room which Mr. Miles and his friends had vacated. On my own removal to Montreal, in 1836, I found Mr. Taylor and his characteristic congregation in possession of their own church building in Lagauchetiere street, lowly and unpretentious, but for the most part, if not wholly, paid for, and an evidence of the caution, honesty and thrift of the people, as also of their enterprise. There was only one minister of the same denomination within reach of Mr. Taylor, namely, the late venerable Mr. Henderson, at St. Andrews. He and I were drawn into happy fraternal intimacy from the beginning, and this continued unbroken through all the changes until his lamented death some years ago. Our Master had given to us both a catholic spirit—our Christian brotherhood was not in the least affected by denominational diversity—and we were of one mind as to the best interests of the community amid which we had come to dwell. Very early we united with Mr. Perkins, pastor of the American Presbyterian Church, Mr. Newton Bosworth, pastor of the Baptist Church, and a brother who

was acting for the American Home Missionary Society in this part of Canada, in forming the Ministerial Association, which has continued until this present. Mr. Taylor and I were in the habit of exchanging pulpits from time to time, and with this advantage, as compared with the present day, that we could sit and listen to each other, his second service being in the afternoon and mine in the evening. This congregation, with its pastor and elders and managers, was famed in early days, and indeed for very many years, for its annual social meetings. They were at once scenes of enjoyment and healthful influence. The number of them which I had the privilege of speaking to for a few minutes was considerable, how many I cannot tell. There was wont to be present always a highly esteemed citizen belonging to another church, the proprietor of one of our influential newspapers, the "*Montreal Transcript*"; and sound Protestants as we all were, every allusion which could give pain to that worthy man was always happily avoided.

At the formation of the French-Canadian Missionary Society, in 1839, when Mr. Taylor and an elder of the church, Mr. Court, undertook, at the request of those of us who remained behind, to visit Britain for funds, and France and Switzerland for missionaries, I came into frequent pleasant intercourse with this church, often occupying the pulpit and rendering other services at weddings and funerals required of the Christian ministry. I must not dwell longer, however, on these merely personal reminiscences.

Our Lord says : "A city set on a hill cannot be hid," and he makes the remark in connection with the influence to be exercised by His disciples. Every true Christian is a witness for God, for truth, and for righteousness—an aggregate of such in a church is a yet mightier-voiced witness. The influence of such witness is an important factor in the days when it is borne, but it is in truth of much wider and far-reaching power for good. Being subtle in its nature, and running along hidden channels, it makes its impression on all the future. When the United Secession Church, afterwards the United Presbyterian Church, set up the banner of the Gospel in this city, its inhabitants did not

exceed about 40,000 in number. But few of our institutions had then an existence. They were created and moulded gradually by the people of the time. Our industries, our commercial and manufacturing establishments, our public schools, as well for elementary as for higher education, our colleges and universities have mostly come into existence between that period and the present time. And whatever influenced for good the people who created and moulded them, whatever raised the tone of morals, gave prominence to righteousness ; whatever conduced to secure honest work and honest dealing, whatever cherished high principles and noble aspirations, whatever tended to take our toil and enterprise and money-getting out of the category of mere selfishness, and to bring them into that which God approves—doing unto others as we would that they should do unto us—was a blessing to the community then and for all time. And in the long run the good prevails—the honest, the true, the right wins the day. I venture to avow the conviction that the Christian Churches and the Christian ministry of Montreal from the beginning have been and are an important factor in any estimate we may make of the causes of our progress and prosperity ; I believe one of the most potent. There is, indeed, no ground for boasting. Had we been more faithful to our Master, and to our proper work, more would have been done ; and what has been done has been through “the good hand of our God upon us.” “We think of Thy loving kindness, O God, in the midst of Thy temple.” In this witness-bearing—this influence for good—no small share must be reckoned to the account of the church now assembling under this roof. Your pastors have preached Christ’s Holy Gospel. The teaching of our Lord and His apostles has ever found in this pulpit clear and faithful exposition. Modes of presenting these great verities vary from age to age, and the phases of such presentation are not the same in every faithful man’s hand, but all the pastors have been learned, competent, and earnest, and thus for fifty years the pulpit of this church has stood firmly by the faith once delivered to the saints. The Gospel of Grace, demanding also loving obedience, has had a continuous voice here ; the trumpet has given a certain sound. The people, as

they came together, and as their families grew up under this ministry, were well taught, and they have been, for the most part, diligent learners. They realized the value of the high principles and practical bearings of the things taught, and thus knew their duty. It was a just remark of the princes of Midian to Gideon: "As the man *is*, so is his strength." We are, therefore, not surprised in reviewing the past of this congregation, in connection with our community, to find that the farmers who dwelt one or two leagues to the northwest of the city were among the best agriculturists on the island, and by their example were of great benefit to those who surrounded them; we are not surprised that machinists, cabinet-makers, builders, did faithful and honest work, and have risen to a position of wealth and influence; that the merchants were honorable men, and that others in their several spheres of life won the respect of their neighbors. By such means the moral standard is raised in the community, greatly to its benefit.

Dr. Taylor very early took ground on what is called "The Temperance Question." He was against the habitual use of intoxicants as unnecessary and dangerous. He was impressed by the manifold evils resulting from that habit, and he united with others in measures for their repression. He maintained a successful conflict and controversy with an astute opponent of such measures; and though at the time there was some diversity of opinion on the subject among his people, yet, as a whole, they stood by him and the cause which he espoused. Members of this congregation were among the originators of the Mechanics' Institute, and have always been its active friends. Dr. Taylor and others, in the earlier days were wont to deliver lectures to somewhat crowded audiences on subjects fitted to interest and improve the men by whom labor is dignified. Dr. Taylor, carrying with him the influence of his people, was active with others in the endeavors to obtain an amended charter for our noble University, so that it might be placed on a broad, non-denominational basis. The efforts were successful; and what a power for good has that Institution become under the presidency, for nearly

thirty years, of a gentleman who was for about two-thirds of that period, a member of this congregation. Nor can I forget the able and luminous addresses which Dr. Taylor year after year delivered on the platform of the anniversary meetings held during the month of January in the St. James Street Methodist Church. By them many were taught, encouraged and stimulated.

You will not be surprised that my mind has naturally turned to the first thirty years of the half century, during which period Dr. Taylor was sole pastor. But when we think of the loving kindness of God in the midst of His temple, we must not forget the last twenty, which have doubtless been on the whole the more blessed of the Lord. You have had a wider sphere in this noble building; for ten years you had an associate pastor, Dr. Gibson, of whom I may not speak particularly, because of his near relationship to myself, but concerning whom I may say that he did loving, faithful, and able work among you, one of the results of which is a warm place in the affections of many. The successor of both is here with his harness on, in the midst of the conflict with sin and Satan, obeying the Master's behests, and doing his best, and that successfully, among you. Of him, in his presence, it would not be delicate to say more; but in view of the whole you will join in the song of the Psalmist, "We have thought of Thy loving kindness, O God, in the midst of Thy temple."

Your patience must not be further taxed. The constant exercise of God's loving kindness during fifty years within this Church includes blessings which no man can number. Every year of the fifty has been marked by the summons to their Father's house above of one and another of His children. They loved the sanctuary, were nourished and strengthened by its holy services, and were sustained in death by the hopes which they cherished. The young were taught and trained—were set in families, and took up the work and service which their fathers laid down. The careless were awakened and brought to Christ the Saviour. The bereaved and sad have had their tears wiped away, and their hands strengthened in God. The tempted and endangered have been warned and rescued, or if, unhappily, they

have fallen, have been restored. Clouds of doubt and despondency have been rolled off many a heart by the sweet light of the Gospel shining upon it by the power of the Holy Spirit. What a passing has there been from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. What delight has been felt as God's loving purposes towards our fallen race have been unfolded—as prediction of prophet and apostle, and promise of the Divine Master himself have been expounded and set forth in their connection with Christian duty. What zeal has been awakened, and what prayers and gifts have been called forth by the claims of the Christ upon His people, as here presented from time to time during fifty years. What greatening of faculties has this involved. What enlargement of vision, What kindling of love. What sympathy with the Christ, His cause, His kingdom. What preparation for worthier living and for peaceful dying. All awakening the blessed anticipation of singing amid harps and anthems of cherubim and seraphim, the grateful utterance of the Hebrew Psalmist : “ We have thought of Thy loving kindness, O God, in the midst of Thy temple,” and of the redeemed creation, “ Blessing and honour and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.”



Sermon by the Rev. D. J. Macdonnell, of Toronto.

Rom. xii : 1.—I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable [or, *rational*, or *spiritual* (American Revisers),] service [or : *worship*.]

This is to you the year of Jubilee. Your minister this morning gave you a record of the history of the church, showing how the Lord had been mindful of you. In the afternoon, under the guidance of the Venerable Dr. Wilkes, you thought of God's loving kindness in the midst of His Temple. It may be fitting to turn your attention briefly to the appeal which Paul makes in this verse, and to the ground on which it rests.

I. THE APPEAL.—“I beseech you . . . that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice,” &c. The sentence is full of sacrificial terms—“present,” “sacrifice,” “holy,” “service.” Those at Rome to whom Paul was writing, whether Jews or Gentiles, were familiar with sacrifice. The Old Testament Scriptures were full of legislation and exhortation in regard to it. The taking of animal life was, among the Jews, associated with the worship of God. The altars of the heathen, too, flowed with blood. There was no such thing as *human* sacrifice amongst the Jews. In other nations the practice was common enough of offering “the fruit of the body for the sin of the soul.” Men asked : “What more precious thing can I devote to God than my life, or the life of one dear to me?” And the question was answered in deeds that seem to us simply horrible, as when the Hindoo mother flung her babe into the Ganges, or the widow burned herself on the funeral pile, or the Peruvian worshippers laid the living man on the altar, and cut out the heart from the quivering flesh that they might offer it to their gods.

Such sacrifices as these involved the giving up of life. Did they bear any resemblance to the “living sacrifice” which Paul

enjoins? One element at least there is in common—devotion to what is thought to be the will of God. We cannot help feeling that such deeds—fearful as they were, and springing from ignorance of the real character of God—were more pleasing in His sight than the self-seeking and self-indulgent lives of many amongst ourselves, who will exercise no self-denial and undergo no privation for the sake of God or man. Better the mistaken worship of the devotee, than the heartless indifference of the self-satisfied worldling. But better far the *true* worship, which is “acceptable to God”—the presenting of our bodies “a living sacrifice.” What, then, is this “living sacrifice?” The portion of the Epistle that follows the text may furnish an answer to the question. As “members one of another,” we are to exercise for the common good the gifts bestowed on us—teaching, exhorting, ministering, ruling, giving, shewing mercy. We are to be kindly affectioned one to another; to communicate to the necessities of saints; to rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep. We are to render to no man evil for evil, but to bless them that persecute us, to do good to our enemies, and so heap coals of fire on their heads, not being overcome of evil, but overcoming evil with good. We are to render to all their dues; to owe no man anything, save to love one another. The strong are to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please themselves, even as Christ pleased not himself. None of us is to live to himself, or to die to himself. “Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s.”

In such sentences as these Paul illustrates what he means by presenting our bodies a living sacrifice. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, who has so much to say on the matter of sacrifice, strikes the same note as Paul, when he writes: “But to do good and to communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.”—(Heb. xiii: 16.) It is not said that good and loving deeds are *better* than sacrifices, but that they *are* themselves sacrifices, with which God is well pleased. They are the outward form in which the spirit of devotion clothes itself, and by which it is recognized.

According to our text, the living sacrifice *must take an external form*. We are to present our "bodies," not simply our *hearts*, or our *wills*, though, of course, the dedication of heart and will is implied as the root from which the presenting of the body springs. The insertion of the word "bodies" may check the tendency to think of religion as a matter of feeling only—the exciting of certain emotions in the breast—*e. g.*, the shaking of the soul with a storm of passionate sorrow for past sin, without the actual turning from sin in the present, or the working up of the heart into a condition of apparently fervent love to God, apart from any practical manifestation of that love in deeds of ministry to men. The sorrow and the love are right, are essential to the Christian life; but they must not be suffered to evaporate; they must be crystallized into action.

We are to present then our "bodies." The body is the organ with which the spirit works; the instrument by means of which the thoughts and purposes of the man are carried into effect. We are to present *ourselves* to God, and our members as instruments of righteousness unto Him. We are to present our *tongues*, so that they shall no longer be "an unruly evil, full of deadly poison," but the organs of God's praise. "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me." Through Jesus Christ we are exhorted to "offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips which make confession to His name (Heb. xiii: 15). The power of speech and song is to be devoted to God. By this I mean not that we are to have the name of God continually upon our lips, or that we are to sing none but sacred words; but that in all our common talk of pleasure, or business, as well as in our converse about higher things, we shall speak in harmony with God's will—truly, gently, kindly, boldly, as occasion requires; and that whatever we sing—be it of love, or war, of home or country—we shall sing to the glory of God. No coarse jests, no ribald songs, will pollute the lips which have been dedicated to God. Humour there will be, and mirth-provoking speech, and merry laughter, for these are good gifts from God; but frivolity will be abjured, and the laugh raised at the expense

of purity or reverence will not be joined. The coarser forms of profanity are, I trust, hardly known amongst the professedly Christian community ; but I fear that our social converse is too often marred by frivolous and irreverent talk. Let us "present" our tongues a living sacrifice, and then our speech will be earnest and reverent, as well as true and loving. We shall deal with the great realities of life, its joys and sorrows, its cares and perplexities, its duties and aims, not in the spirit of a comic journal, but as men impressed with the seriousness of life, and its marvellous possibilities. Upon all our common talk shall be inscribed "Holiness to the Lord."

Nor shall we fail to speak of the things which belong to our spiritual welfare, and of Him in whom all our spiritual life centres—to tell what he hath done for our souls, to speak of the things touching the King. I have said that we need not have the name of God continually upon our lips ; but surely neither are we to be atheistic or agnostic in our talk, carefully avoiding all reference to the God in whom we live and move, and have our being, by whose love we have been redeemed, by whose grace our hearts are established. The "sacrifice of praise" which we are to offer up to God continually is defined in the passage already quoted from the Epistle to the Hebrews to be "*the fruit of the lips* which make confession to His name." We are to "confess" with the "mouth" Jesus as Lord, as well as to believe in the heart that God raised Him from the dead ; "for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." We are not to be ashamed to avow ourselves the followers of Jesus. We are to acknowledge Him as our Lord in all the relations of life.

It will be our delight to "present" our tongues to God when we come together to sing His praise in the congregation, when the many little rills of thanksgiving from individual hearts ascend in one great stream of praise to the throne of God, when the thankfulness of each worshipper is intensified by the presence and sympathy of many others of like passions and of similar experience, and we thus teach and admonish one another with

psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts unto God. In like manner we are called on to "present" all our members as part of the "living sacrifice." We are to present our *hands*, so that they shall touch no unclean thing, but be ready for every good work, stretched forth to help the needy, uplifted to defend the right. The commonest manual labour and the greatest triumphs of scientific skill, are alike to be sacrifices offered to the Lord—fit for His eye to see. Therefore, there must be no scamped work, no shirking of duty undertaken, no eye service. We are to present our *feet*, so that they shall run in the paths of righteousness, so that in this day, when "many run to and fro," and new continents are opened up for settlement, all activity may be consecrated and the Gospel of Christ may be carried to the remotest bounds of the habitable earth. We are to present our *eyes*, so that they shall not delight in beholding "vanity," but in seeing the beauty and glory of God's works; our *ears*, so that they shall not willingly listen to folly or falsehood, or to the world's din, but shall be open to the voice of God, speaking in manifold ways, open to the cry of the needy, the ignorant, and the lost. In short, every power, every sense, every faculty, is to be devoted to God. Our bodies are not to be kingdoms in which sin reigns, but temples in which God's spirit dwells. The body is to be the servant of the spirit, and body and spirit servants of the Lord.

The key-note of our whole life, even as of Christ's, is to be, "Lo, I am come to do Thy will, O God." For it is of Christ that we must learn to offer this living sacrifice. It is remarkable how many statements there are setting forth the close relation and resemblance of the sacrifices we are to offer to that which Christ has offered. In the very article of His great sacrifice of Himself, there is that which we are to imitate. Hear His own words: "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant, *even as* the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." (Matth. xx: 27, 28.) Listen to Peter, as he connects the sufferings of persecuted Christians with the sufferings of Christ for sin:

“If ye suffer for righteousness sake, happy are ye * * * for it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing. *For Christ also* hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.” (1 Peter, iii : 14, 17, 18.) Mark the connection in which Paul introduces that most striking passage in His letter to the Philippians, in which he sets forth the incarnation, the humiliation and the glory of Christ. He is entreating the Philippian converts to be “of one accord, of one mind ;” to do “nothing through strife or vainglory,” but in lowliness of mind, each to esteem other better than himself ; to look not every man to his own things, but every man also to the things of others. Then he appeals, as he so often does, to the highest example of all : “Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men ; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross.” (Phil. ii : 5, 8.) Hear the same apostle, as in writing to the Ephesians, he exhorts them to “be imitators of God, as beloved children, and walk in love, *even as* Christ also loved us, and gave Himself up for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odour of a sweet smell.” (Eph., v : 1, 2.) We are not, therefore, to think of the sacrifice of Christ as utterly incomprehensible or inimitable. There may be elements in that “one sacrifice” which He has offered for the sins of the world which we cannot comprehend ; but there is much which we can both understand and imitate. If Christ’s sacrifice is incomprehensible, it is mainly because His *love* “passeth knowledge,” and the more our spirits become imbued with that love, the further we shall see into the divine mystery of redemption. It is because we are so cold and dead, and have so little sympathy with the mind of Christ, that we are so much in the dark as to the meaning of His work. We must “learn Christ,”—not merely certain facts about Him, but Himself, His spirit, His personality—and then we shall understand what is the meaning of “a living sacrifice.” “The truth is in Jesus”—the reality of all that is good—the germinal principles

needed for all our life. When we ask, What is the truth which I need as a basis for life? On what principles am I to live so as to be blessed? The answer comes from the lips of Jesus, "I am the truth." "Learn of me, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." When we ask further, What was the guiding principle of the life of Christ? The answer comes again from His own lips: "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me." "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work." It may seem to us that if there was one being who might have done His own will and found blessedness in the doing of it, it was the Son of God in human form. Yet it was not so. "Not my will, but Thine, be done," was His cry as the crisis of His work drew near.

And now the disciple is to be as his Master. We, on the petty scale of our little lives, even as He on the grand scale of His divine life, are to say: "Lo, I am come to do Thy will, O God." That must be the key-note of the living sacrifice which we offer. We are to ask not, "How can I please myself?" but "Lord, what will Thou have me to do?" This giving up of our own will involves self-denial—not the self-denial, however, of the ascetic, who seeks to crush natural feeling, and to warp his nature. We are not to cut off the right hand to shew how bravely we can bear pain; a savage can do that. We are not to go fasting so that we may gain special credit for holiness on account of the emaciation of our bodies. But we are to endure any privation for the sake of truth and right—for the sake of sinning, sorrowing, suffering men. We are to *give ourselves* for the blessing of others, even as the Lord Christ gave Himself for us. We are to give, not our money only, but our thought, our time, our talents, our love, our toil, our life to the serving of Christ by ministering to His little ones.

Such a sacrifice, Paul says, is "holy"—separated, set apart, devoted. Just as the temple was a holy place, set apart for divine worship, or the Sabbath holy time, set apart for rest, so the life of the Christian man is to be holy—set apart for the Lord—"not conformed to this world," not fashioned according to the spirit of

the age, but devoted to the Lord's service. Not a secluded life in some safe and sheltered place, where the strife of tongues and the storms of temptation will not reach him ; but a life lived in the glare of common day, amid the conflict of human passions and interests, yet animated by a spirit not of earth, but of heaven.

Such a sacrifice is "acceptable,—well-pleasing to God." It must be so ; for it breathes the mind of Christ, and it is the mind of Christ in us that God loves. It is well-pleasing in a sense in which the offering of lambs and pigeons could not be ; for it is the *man himself*—not merely something that he can buy with money—that is offered.

This presenting of our bodies is a "rational" or spiritual "service" or worship ;—rational, as distinguished from irrational idol-worship, spiritual as distinguished from the worship of mere outward form. "Pure worship and undefiled before God and the Father is this," writes St. James, "to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." Not only when we sing the solemn hymn of praise, or bend the knee in lowly adoration, or receive the memorials of Christ's broken body and shed blood at His table,—not only in such sacred acts as these do we worship God, but when we do our daily tasks as in His sight, when we speak our common words as in His hearing, when we minister to the sick, or the sad, or the sinful in His name. God is love ; holy is His name : by deeds of love, and a life of purity we best express our homage.

II. THE GROUND OF THE APPEAL—"By the mercies of God." In the three preceeding chapters, Paul has been describing the way of God's mercy to Jews and Gentiles, (ch. xi, 11, 12, 25, 26, 32, 33,.) He concludes with a burst of adoration : "Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God !" It is by these "mercies" that he entreats the Roman Christians. And this is the usual ground of appeal in apostolic preaching. Terror is a weapon rarely used. Paul does not hold men in imagination over the brink of the bottomless pit that he may frighten them into goodness. Terror has its value in arousing.

We must do anything to awaken a soul that is asleep in sin. Still it remains true that the fear of hell, by itself, never converts a soul. Fear of pain is one thing: fear of sin is another. Fear of pain is fear that hath torment. Love casts out this fear, while it strengthens that other fear—the fear of the Lord by which men depart from evil—the dread of grieving our Father in heaven, and having the light of His countenance withdrawn.

Love is the great moving power. It is so between man and man. Love begets love. The love which the mother lavishes in unwearied watchfulness and care and patience, is at length rewarded by responsive love on the part of the child. So it is between God and man. “We love Him because He first loved us.”

The ground of the sacrifices offered by the heathen, was their dread of the anger of their gods. Something costly enough to satisfy the wrath of these gods was needed. The ground of the Christian’s living sacrifice is his sense of God’s mercies. “What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me? is the language of God’s restored child. And the first answer which God makes to this question is, “Give me thine heart.” Said a poor scholar once to a philosopher, “I have nothing but myself to give.” “It is well,” replied the philosopher, “and I will endeavour to give thee back to thyself better than I received thee.” So may each of us go to our Heavenly Father, saying, “I have nothing but myself to give,” and He will renew and refine us, so that we shall be worth more to ourselves and to the world now, and He will afterward receive us to glory.

“I beseech you by the mercies of God.”

Does not the appeal come home to each one of us? Have there not been mercies manifold—daily bread and nightly rest, the glorious sunshine and the fertilizing rain, songs of birds and fragrance of flowers, friends to cheer us, and children to gladden our homes, the words of the wise and the sympathy of the loving, the Bible, the Church, the Lord’s Day, help in weakness, light

in darkness, comfort in sorrow—all summed up in God's "unspeakable gift"? "How precious are Thy thoughts toward us, O God, how great is the sum of them."

"New mercies each returning day
Hover around us while we pray;
New perils past, new sins forgiven,
New thoughts of God, new hopes of heaven."

Brethren, may I not in a special manner beseech *you*, who are engaged in hallowing the fiftieth year of your existence as a congregation, by "the mercies of God" bestowed on you during your history, to consecrate yourselves afresh to the service of the Lord? You and your fathers have had faithful and able ministers to break amongst you the bread of life. It is no small privilege to have had for forty-three years such a man as the late venerable Dr. Taylor to unfold to you the counsel of God—to have been built up a spiritual house by this wise master-builder. Into God's courts you have come week after week, that you might be fed, refreshed, comforted. Here many of you were dedicated to God in baptism. Here you have sat at the Lord's Table with many loved ones, now passed from your sight. Hither the sick in soul have come, as to an hospital, that they might be healed, and the Healer has restored them; blind eyes have been opened to see spiritual realities, deaf ears have been unstopped so that God's voice has been heard, palsied souls have been quickened into newness of life. Hither, as to school, have you come, young men and maidens, old men and children, that you might learn Christ and be taught in Him. Here, as soldiers of Christ, you have been trained to wield the sword of the Spirit, and to use the whole armour of God. There are hallowed memories of spiritual blessing connected with this house and those which preceded it. Through all the changes of these fifty years the Lord has commanded His loving kindness in the day time, and in the night His song has been with you.

Such privileges call for fresh consecration. Your resolve to raise five thousand dollars for missions as a special thank-offering is a most Christian way of celebrating your jubilee. I trust it

will be the seed of larger thoughts concerning the extension of Christ's Kingdom, and larger gifts for that purpose in coming years, not only on the part of this congregation, but of many others similarly situated.

I pray that the next fifty years may witness great and blessed growth amongst you in knowledge and grace ; that you may not be content with the conventional standard of Christian living, but may have life "more abundantly" according to Christ's promise—more true-hearted courage, more winning gentleness, more intense purity, more devoted love to Christ, more fervent charity to men ; that you all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord, may be transformed unto the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit. Peace be within these walls. "The God of peace himself sanctify you wholly ; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." For yourselves and for your children take up the prayer of the man of God : "Let Thy work appear unto Thy servants, and Thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us ; and establish Thou the work of our hands upon us ; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it."



Letter from the Rev. J. M. Gibson, D.D.

ST. JOHN'S WOOD, LONDON.

To the Session and Congregation of Erskine Church, Montreal:

MY VERY DEAR FRIENDS,—

I regret exceedingly that I should be so far away as not to be able to join personally in the celebration of your Jubilee ; but I shall be with you in spirit ; and it is to assure you of this that I now write.

The occasion brings to me many memories both tender and solemn. I am now in the nineteenth year of my ministry ; and more than half of that time I had the privilege of ministering to you. I have as deep a sense still as ever of my indebtedness to you for your forbearance with the weakness of my youth, your kind appreciation of my work, and your cordial co-operation in the varied enterprises in which we were engaged during these ten years.

Since I parted from you I have kept up my interest in the congregation, and have rejoiced exceedingly to hear of its continued prosperity under the ministry of my esteemed successor ; and now that the year of Jubilee has come, I join with all my heart in the joy of the time, uniting with you in giving God thanks for His grace and goodness in the past, and sharing in those longings for increased fruitfulness and fuller consecration to the work of the Lord, which I am sure the occasion will awaken in many earnest hearts.

With fullest sympathy also do I enter into those feelings of sadness which will stir the hearts, especially of the older members of the session and congregation, as the former times are called to mind. It is a solemn and affecting thing for me, to think that in

the short interval since I bade you farewell, so very many have passed away. I recall the venerable and beloved form of Dr. Taylor ; I think of the empty chairs, were we to attempt to summon again that noble Session over which he and I presided ; and as I picture the familiar scene on the Lord's Day, it moves me to think how many would have to be recalled from the " General Assembly " above, to make up the congregation to which I had the happy privilege of ministering only nine years ago. I think also of some who were then in the full activity of devoted service, now enfeebled by age and infirmity ; but I know that they are still serving the Lord Christ as truly as ever, and rejoicing, as I rejoice, that so many of our dear children of those days are now putting their hands earnestly to the work. With them, and with you all, I join in the fervent prayer that any, who may be still standing without may now at last, "*to-day, after so long a time,*" hear the voice of Him who has so often called them to take His yoke upon them.

There are many things I would wish to say, for which a letter does not afford the space. I feel sure that my old friends will know what is in my heart ; and, therefore, I shall not indulge myself any further in writing. I intend, however, to have my part with you in the services of the occasion. I shall mention the circumstances to my congregation here, and ask them to join me in earnest prayer on your behalf, and I shall unite with you in seeking to make this the occasion for a reconsecration to the service of our blessed Lord and Saviour, which I need as much as you.

I conclude with the prayer of Col. i : 9-13, and the old familiar benediction : " The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen."

Your old friend and minister,

J. M. GIBSON.

Address by the Chairman, James Williamson, Esq.

MY DEAR CHRISTIAN FRIENDS :

As a Church we have now entered on our year of Jubilee, and this social gathering of the congregation and its friends is held to celebrate the event. This Church had a lowly beginning in a small school-room in McGill street ; but the Lord has been on our side, and has blessed and prospered us. The small grain of mustard seed planted fifty years ago in great weakness, but strong faith, by earnest, God-fearing men, has become a great tree, under whose branches this large congregation finds ample shade and security.

Fifty years works a great change in the membership of a church. I am much pleased, however, to be able to say that we have present here to-night several gentlemen who have been connected with this Church from its commencement. Some of these will shortly address you, and will give their reminiscences of the early history of the Church, which cannot fail to be highly interesting to all present.

With God's ancient people the year of Jubilee was a time of great joy. The trumpet was blown throughout the land. The slaves were set at liberty, and the lands that had become alienated during the previous forty-nine years were restored to their original owners. It was a season of festivity and gladness. In this, our year of Jubilee, therefore, we desire to imitate the Jews ; to rejoice with exceeding great joy, and to thank the Lord for all His goodness to us, as a Church, in the years that are past, and to implore His guidance for the future. It is true we have no slaves to set free, in the sense in which the Jews had slaves. We have no lands to restore, since the Levitical Law is not in force. But we have many other duties to perform as Christians ; and the most binding duty of all is to spread abroad a knowledge of Him

who alone can free from the bondage of sin and the fear of death. The great enemy of men's souls never proclaims a Jubilee to his slaves. But God, through Jesus Christ, has proclaimed a perpetual and universal Jubilee to a world lying in sin ; and there is not a year nor a day in which He is not willing and ready to deliver from the bondage of sin, if men will only forsake the service of Satan, and take upon them the yoke of Christ, which is easy, and his burden, which is light.

The membership of this, as of every other church, is continually changing. In a few years the young men of the congregation will have to assume the duties of carrying on its work. Let me say to them, in concluding, that, just in proportion as they earnestly endeavor to carry on the work for Christ, will this Church and their own souls prosper.



Address by David Brown, Esq.

DEAR FRIENDS,

Having been requested to give some reminiscences of this church fifty years ago, I may begin by stating that it was organized in 1833, in connection with the Secession Church of Scotland.

There was no congregation in connection with that body then, but I find that in 1818 the Rev. R. Easton, Montreal ; Rev. Wm. Smart, of Brockville ; Rev. Wm. Taylor, of Osnabruck and Williamsburg, and the Rev. Wm. Bell, of Perth, were created a Presbytery. It appears, however, that this did not long continue. Mr. Easton was the minister of St. Andrew's Church, but having lost his sight, resigned his charge about 1822, and the majority of his congregation decided to apply to the Church of Scotland for another minister, and a number of Americans also left when St. Andrew's Church became a State Church, and formed what is now known as the American Presbyterian Church. I understand that the Rev. Mr. Bell also joined the Established body about this time, or shortly after. In speaking of Mr. Bell, I may mention that I was present at his ordination, which took place in Bristo Street Church, Edinburgh, in 1817 or 1818.

But to return to the commencement of this church. In 1831 a few individuals met in December of that year to consult as to how and by what means a minister in connection with the Secession Church could be brought out from the Old Country to Montreal. After several meetings they decided to write to Dr. Mitchell, of Glasgow, to ascertain if he could assist them in sending out a minister. These were not the days of steamships nor ocean cables, and they had to wait long for an answer, but at last it came in the person of Mr. D. Shanks, a licenciate, who came out with letters of introduction from Dr. Mitchell. This was in May, 1832. Mr. Shanks was engaged for one year, several parties binding themselves to pay his salary, but how much it was, I can-

not say now. He commenced his labors in a school-room in McGill street belonging to Mr. Bruce, who was also one of the parties interested in bringing Mr. Shanks to Montreal. He (Mr. Bruce) never connected himself with the congregation, but shortly afterwards joined St. Paul's Church, under the Rev. Dr. Black, and was an elder in that congregation.

The services were fairly attended, but Mr. Shanks not being an ordained minister, and there being no Presbytery at that time in Canada to ordain him, the congregation could not be organized. This state of things continued for a month or two, when three ministers arrived from Scotland, viz., Rev. Thos. Christie, Rev. Wm. Proudfoot, and the Rev. Wm. Robertson. They had all congregations in Scotland. Mr. Christie, in Holme, Orkney; Mr. Proudfoot, in Pitrodie, Carse of Gowrie, and Mr. Robertson, in Cupar of Fyfe. The two first, Messrs. Christie and Proudfoot, went to Western Canada, but Mr. Robertson being requested, remained in Montreal, and at once set about organizing a congregation. A number of certificates were handed in to him, and he met with several of the young people anxious to join the church; but before all the requisite arrangements were completed Mr. Robertson died of cholera, very suddenly. He took ill on Saturday afternoon, and was buried on Sabbath morning, very few of the congregation knowing of his death until they met at 11 o'clock in the school-room.

This was a great blow to the young congregation. Mr. Shanks, however, continued his services, but the numbers attending gradually fell off, and the meetings during the winter of 1832-33 were very small.

About the end of April, 1833, the parties who had engaged Mr. Shanks notified him that his services would be dispensed with at the end of his engagement. Of course he felt aggrieved, and complained that he had been badly used. He asked for the names of those present at the meeting at which the resolution was passed; how many voted for and against it, and the reasons for dispensing with his services. A meeting was called to answer Mr. Shanks' questions.

The first resolution gave the names of those present.

The second gave as a reason the want of means to continue.

The third resolution, that Mr. Shanks was not qualified to discharge all the duties of a minister of the United Secession Church.

The fourth, that Mr. Shanks, having departed from the rules of the United Secession Church by reading his sermons, was another reason for dispensing with his services.

At this meeting a resolution was passed unanimously sustaining Mr. Shanks' good character, and this ended the connection of Mr. Shanks with the congregation, in May, 1833. He, however, shortly after this, connected himself with the Church of Scotland, and was for some years settled at St. Eustache. He removed from there to Valcartier, but died several years ago.

The school-room was closed for some Sabbaths at this time, but in the beginning of June, 1833, other three ministers arrived from Scotland. These were Rev. Wm. Taylor, Rev. Geo. Murray, and Rev. Robert Thornton. Rev. Mr. Taylor had been settled in Peebles, and the other two had been ordained on their leaving for Canada. Mr. Thornton went west, and Mr. Taylor and Mr. Murray remained in Montreal to organize the congregation. They met on the 10th June, 1833, with a number of those who had been attending the meetings, and after being informed that Mr. Shanks was no longer connected with the congregation, they proceeded by taking a list of those present, who were desirous of becoming members. Several week day meetings were held for receiving additional names to this list, and on the 20th June, 1833, the congregation was formed with seventy-five names.

Rev. Mr. Murray was the Moderator, Rev. W. Taylor preached the sermon, and after an address by the Moderator on the origin and doctrines of the United Secession Church, he asked those present to declare their belief in them. The meeting having assented, he declared those on the list a congregation in full communion with the United Secession Church of Scotland.

On the 26th June six elders were elected, viz., Messrs. Robt. Whitford, Robt. McLean, James Middlemiss, Andrew Spaulding, John Anderson and Robert Watt. (Mr. Watt, however, declined.) They were ordained on the 7th July, and the first communion, with thirty additional names, was celebrated on the 14th July. Of the one hundred and five names on that first communion roll, Mrs. Brown and myself are all that remain in connection with this congregation, but there are four others in the city, viz., Mr. Geo. Rogers, Mr. and Mrs. Hector Munro, and Mr. James Kinleyside.

The Secular Committee was elected about the 20th June. Twelve members were elected, the first six names on the list to retire each year, and the same arrangement continues to this day.

On the 15th July a congregational meeting was held for the purpose of extending a call. The Candidate being the Rev. Messrs. Wm. Taylor and Wm. Murray. The call was almost unanimous in favor of the Rev. Wm. Taylor, and on the following Sabbath he accepted it, and from that time was our minister.

There was no formal induction. He merely stated that he accepted the call, and that agreement lasted during his lifetime. At this time all the male members of the congregation, were journeymen mechanics, with the exception of three, but shortly afterwards several merchants, and others in business on their own account, joined the congregation.

This necessitated the getting of a larger place of worship, and the American congregation kindly gave us the use of theirs for one year, during the hours that they did not require it. In the meantime steps were taken to build a church for ourselves, and a lot of land was bought, on which was built the church now forming the corner of Chenneville and Lagauchetiere streets. It was a very plain, unassuming looking building, having only one coat of plaster on the walls and ceiling inside. Our aristocratic friends down town used to speak of it as the "Wee Kirk at Little Dublin;" a row of small houses near it being occupied by Irish families.

The foundation stone was laid by Rev. W. Taylor, but we had no silver trowel to present him with, nor any money to put into the stone, as at that time we had none to spare. The building had to be roofed in before it was its full height, and after some time the pews were put in, and the church formally opened in January, 1835.

I might here mention that several of the members had to become personally responsible to the contractors of the building, and one of those, Mr. James Roy, is present with us to-night. Other members, who were mechanics, gave their subscription to the building fund in work, the contractor accounting for it as so much *cash on account*. Mr. Geo. Pringle, who at this time was an elder, made the pulpit as his share of the work, and it was the handsomest in the city at that time. Mr. Pringle died a few years ago in Ontario at the age of 92.

But even this building soon was too small for the wants of the congregation, and in 1847 it was decided to raise the walls, and put in galleries all round. This being accomplished, a good school-room was made under the church, as previous to this it was only a cellar. During these alterations and additions the congregation met for public worship in St. Gabriel Street Church. The late Rev. Mr. Leishman and Dr. Taylor preaching alternately, morning and afternoon. After removing back to our enlarged church, the congregation kept steadily increasing.

A few years subsequently Dr. Taylor was prostrated by severe illness, and by the advice of the Session, a colleague was proposed to be called, as the doctor felt himself unable to fulfil the duties devolving upon him.

A congregational meeting was held early in 1863, and a call was sent to the Rev. J. M. Gibson, now Dr. Gibson, of St. John's Wood, London, which he accepted. At this time it was decided to build a new church in a better situation, and early in 1864 the lot on which this present church now stands was purchased, and the foundation partly laid. The building was completed and opened for public worship on the last Sabbath of April, 1866, seventeen years ago yesterday.

I shall not trespass on your time any longer, but wish merely to add that the men who were the leaders in establishing this congregation, although not rich in this world's goods, were rich in those qualities which go to make up a good congregation.

And of the late Dr. Taylor let me say that, although most of the present members and young folks, remember him as an elderly or old man, when he accepted the call to be our minister, he was only thirty years of age, a young man amongst strangers, but he was a willing worker, and it was not many weeks before he had visited every member of his congregation, which custom he kept up for very many years. He was afraid of no work that was for the good and welfare of his people and the city at large. He established a Bible class in his own house before we had a school-room of our own to meet in.

As nearly every one here present remembers the late Doctor, and as his death took place at a comparative recent date, it is unnecessary for me to detain you any longer with any further remarks of mine, as I should only be trespassing on those speakers who are to follow me.



Address by James Roy, Esq.

DEAR FRIENDS,

It is good to remember the days of old, and the years that are gone. Half a century is a long course of years to look back upon, full of interest, fraught, as they are, with many of the shifting scenes of life, many cares, many sorrows, many ups and downs, but also many joys and blessings, and many of those elements which constitute human happiness. I think in every well balanced mind the latter greatly predominate.

When this congregation was first formed, Montreal was comparatively a small city, not very clean, a great many open ditches in it, but now, in outward appearance, it is one of the first on the continent. This congregation has kept pace with it in its growth.

I joined the church in the summer of 1834. It had been in existence over twelve months, but was then comparatively small. In the outward aspect of the character of its members there might be a little roughness, some narrow views of life, but great energy, earnestness, and Christian devotion, men of true worth, of whom it may be said: That whatsoever their hand found to do, they did it with all their might. Where all did their best, according to their ability and circumstances, it would be invidious to single out names; though, as my mind goes back, one face after another springs into remembrance, and a crowd of recollections force themselves on me, but which it is impossible to dwell upon. My association with such men is amongst the pleasantest reminiscences of my life. Nearly all are gone where we must soon follow. They were gathered from almost every county in Scotland, a few from the North of Ireland, and a few from elsewhere. There was in consequence, considerable diversity of character, but oneness in their religious views.

The smallness of the number made it comparatively easy to know one another. There was a constant inter-communion amongst its members, a good deal of that interchange of the best feelings of our nature, which wonderfully strengthens a people for any work they may have before them.

The difficulties with which we were surrounded made it necessary to have many meetings of the congregation, elders and managers. These business meetings had very much of a social element about them; it was the constant aim of those in the management to get an audible expression of opinion from as many as possible, knowing that when men take part in the business of a meeting, they identify themselves more with the cause they are engaged in. We were, for Presbyterians, a very democratic body of men; indeed, we went to the uttermost limits that the Presbyterian polity would admit of. In the eyes of the world the Secession Church was not a popular body, though the founders of it—the two brothers Erskine, Gillespie, and a few others, were men greatly in advance of their times. They were the true authors of the modern phase of civil and religious liberty, which prevails so extensively at the present day.

We had also very popular and enjoyable soirees, no small means of knitting us together. As Dr. Wilkes stated in his admirable and affectionate sermon, we were in that respect somewhat in advance of other religious bodies in town, and none should know better, for he often contributed in no small degree to their success by his presence. We had very frequent evening parties at one another's homes. There were no such fine houses amongst the members then as many of them now have, but you all know that there is as much love in the cottage as in the palace, and often a great deal more peace and content. I may say they were almost exclusively conversational parties. You can easily conceive that our most worthy and popular pastor, Dr. Taylor, was the soul and centre of these gatherings. He was a gentleman in the best sense of the term—a Christian gentleman. He had a well-furnished mind, was a good conversationalist, as ready to impart his opinions as to hear those of others; at the same time dignified and

urbane, and genial withal—making everyone feel at home in his company. He understood the art of conversation well, and was aware that the meanest human being knew something that his fellows did not know, and that there was some bright spot in his or her nature that only required a little tact to bring out. These may seem inconsiderable things to dwell upon, but perhaps not a little of the social character of the congregation may be due to them.

Now I would not have it be supposed that the men and women of this church were any better than the men and women of other churches. No, we had plenty of faults and failings, there were no perfect men amongst us. I must say, in the knowledge of my own imperfection, I do not think I would have been much at home with them had there been any. Well, we had none—have none now—and never will have. No son of Adam is without flaw ; some dross adheres to him in his best estate—and I suppose I may say the same of every daughter of Eve, but am not at all so sure of that ; it is with hesitation that I make the slightest allusion to it. Of *this* I am certain, and can speak with great confidence, that they have a much greater capacity of loving than men, and you are well aware that love is the essence of the religious life, the cement of society, the only elixir of life that I ever had any belief in. The Kingdom of God is love. The ladies have, in the course of its history, been a great power in this church, as they ever are in all churches. I do not mean simply in ministering to our creature comforts, but in their works of charity and mercy—in their attending to the neglected, and remembering the forgotten, both inside and outside the church ; in their ministrations at the sick bed ; *there* woman is all but omnipotent ; *there* man must stand, in a great measure, outside. No man is so well equipped for the battle of life as he who has a loving wife by his side ; so the church is never so powerful for good as when it has a phalanx of zealous ladies working with it.

I think I may fairly claim a good record for Erskine Church in its relation to the society of which we form a part. To the public of Montreal it has given a great many good men and true—a few of their number prominent in the conduct of public

business—honored by the citizens and an honor to the church ; but I mainly mean that it has added many to the framework of society, men who make a conscience of *duty*, whose watchword is duty. Wordsworth, in his celebrated Ode to Duty, says

"It wears the Godhead's most benignant grace ;
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face :
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds
And fragrance in thy footing treads."

Fragrance treads in the footing of every man who performs a beneficent action, who even exchanges a kindly greeting with his fellow man. We may fairly look upon such actions and such feelings as the flowering out of Christianity. I believe that the future of the Church of Christ is bound up with a more devoted preaching of the love of Christ, both in His divine and human character, even if it were to the partial ignoring of those things hard to be understood, and which contain as little nourishment for the soul of man, as the husks which the Prodigal Son did eat, for his body. He was *far* from his father. May not that *farness* from his father have been a greater punishment than being condemned to eat swine's food. May not farness from the Father be, if not *the* hell, *a* hell, and *nearness* to the Father our heaven. My remarks have chiefly had reference to the social history of the first thirty years of the church. After that I went to live in the country, which necessarily to some extent lessened my intercourse with its members. About that time this building was opened for public worship, when Mr. now Dr. Gibson, became Dr. Taylor's colleague. He certainly by his abilities and fervid earnestness gave an impetus to the prosperity and spiritual life of the church, especially to its missionary zeal, and greatly extended its work by the schemes which he, to some extent, initiated. That work has been well carried on under our present able pastor, Mr. Black, and I trust it may continue for many years to come, which, under the blessing of God, it cannot fail to do.

Address by Warden King, Esq.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND BRETHREN OF ERSKINE CHURCH :

Those who have preceded me this evening have spoken of the more temporal aspects of the congregational work during these past fifty years. It has been left to me to say something about the spiritual side of its aims, and upon such an occasion when our hearts are stirred within us, as we call to mind—as did Israel of old—all the ways in which the Lord our God has led and prospered us, we should do so with humble as well as with thankful hearts ; but we cannot do so without feelings of sadness, because of the absence of so many of those who took part in the early struggles of this congregation, and are now no more with us. Let us who are here record our thanksgivings while we remember the dear ones who are gone and whom we still cherish in our hearts. We would that more of them had been spared to recount with us the loving-kindness of the Lord to-night, and to join with us in laying upon God's Altar, the thank-offering we now present, and may God accept it and honor it for His service, "and revive us again that we may rejoice in him."

I cannot from personal knowledge speak of the affairs of this congregation for more than the forty-two years, during the most of which time I have been a member ; and for thirty-three years (or since 1850) a member of the Session. In thinking of this latter fact I am reminded of many shortcomings on my part, and of the great forbearance of the Lord. So intensely do I feel this, that I would like to dwell on my own personal experiences ; of the strivings of God's Spirit with mine ; on the battles lost and won ; in engagements with sin, Satan, the world and the flesh, through which young christians have to pass. But on an occasion like the present it is more becoming to speak of the congregation, and how it has fared ; more especially during the earlier days of its eventful history.

It is well known to all the church that Dr. Taylor during his long and useful career amongst us stood manfully in the breach wherever work was to be done for the Master, not only in his own congregation and among his own flock, but in the city or elsewhere. Wherever the lever might be skilfully applied for elevating the masses and advancing the cause of the Gospel, there he was to be found. But principally in his own congregation and among his own flock his labors were unceasing, his mind was—more particularly during the early part of his ministry—always bent on devising schemes for the spiritual welfare of his people, in which he was ably seconded by the members of his session and congregation.

Among these efforts the Sabbath School and Bible Class stood prominent, in both of which he labored to instil sound doctrine into the hearts of the young, and with this view encouraged the holding of a weekly meeting of teachers for the study of the lesson, which he sometimes attended, and which became a means of much good to both teachers and scholars. The Bible Class was for many years held on Sabbath Evenings from 7 to 8 o'clock, the attendance being from 40 to 60. The students who attended it read the Scriptures in turn, and questions were proposed and answers obtained. Regular courses of study were taken up, such as :—

The Shorter Catechism.

The Acts of the Apostles.

The Religious Denominations of the world.

The History of the Israelites from the days of Abraham.

The Epistles to the Romans, Galatians, Philippians, &c.

Written exercises upon these subjects were frequently asked and obtained from the class, and the subjects were illustrated by maps of his own preparing.

This class formed the nursery of the Sabbath School teachers, and there are many in this city and elsewhere who speak of the profit they derived there, and who ever look upon it as the means which led to their conversion. In the course of time the condition

of Dr. Taylor's health was such as to render it necessary for him to retire from his Bible-Class work. At this time—fortunately for us—Principal Dawson of McGill College undertook to conduct it, and did so with great acceptance for a number of years, as many who are here to-day can abundantly testify. While these ministrations, received Dr. Taylor's utmost care and attention, the congregational services were not by any means neglected, the preaching of the Word was earnestly performed, sinners were converted, and saints were built up in their most holy faith.

In carrying on the pastoral work of the congregation, the members of the Session were always willing to second the pastor's efforts in every department of the church's work. Many of its members have fallen asleep, and many others by reason of the burden of years and increasing infirmities, are compelled to rest from their labors, and await patiently, resignedly, and cheerfully, the summons that shall call them home. These frequently have testified to the profit they received from their visits to members of the church in health and in sickness; and have found that by ministering to others their own souls were abundantly refreshed.

Thirty or forty years ago Missions—Home and Foreign—did not occupy so large a place in our acknowledged church work as they do to-day. The call to go forth was not very frequently recognized. In 1845—thirty-eight years ago—this important work began to be more fully understood. Missionary meetings had some time before that been held on the first Monday of each month, at which Missionary intelligence was given, prayer for this department of the work specially offered, and a collection taken up. These means led to an effort to procure increased contributions for the missionary cause, and in order to do it efficiently the congregation was divided into districts, and collectors appointed. I have in my possession two collectors' books of that date—one of which belonged to a lady long since deceased—whose district extended from Beaver Hall Hill to Sanguinet Street, and the other to a young man still with us—then young—but now no longer so, whose district was all east of Sanguinet Street. The subscriptions on these books are not large, some of

them only one penny a week, the subscribers generally insisted on paying weekly, and their subscriptions are marked as having been so collected. For want of efficient management this system fell into disuse until 1855, when Dr. Taylor requested the congregation to make weekly offerings for missions. Some responded, and in his book for January, 1855, the following sums are credited :—

		£	s.	d.
January 7.	Miscellaneous contributions....	5	7	½
“ 8.	Monthly meeting.....	1	0	6
“ 14.	One donation.....	2	6	
“ 21.	— King.....	1	3	
“ 28.	Miss Morton.....	6	3	
		<u>£1 16 1 ½</u>		

	£	s.	d.
And the total collection for that year was...	27	0	2
Annual collection last Sabbath of the year..	22	14	6
<u>£49 14 8</u>			

Or about \$199.

In 1855 a permanent Missionary Committee was appointed, with Mr. Andrew Robertson as secretary. One hundred copies of the United Presbyterian Missionary Record were imported from Scotland for distribution, which did much good in stirring up an interest in missions. This Record was afterwards superseded by our Canadian Missionary Record, which has been continued until now. In 1860 the congregation was again divided into districts, and collectors appointed for the Missionary Society, this method continued until four years ago, when our present pastor introduced the system of combining all the collections of the church in one weekly offering—from which a definite proportion is devoted to missionary and other objects—this plan has been found to work well and give satisfaction.

The following shews the Missionary income in past years, viz :—

1855.....	\$199.00.
1858.....	260.00.
1865.....	1,506.00.

And so on increasing every year.

In 1863-'64 the Rev. Dr. Taylor's health was somewhat impaired, and our numbers having outgrown our accommodation in the old church, corner of Lagauchetiere and Chenneville Streets, it became necessary to introduce a change. This state of things at that time led to the call of the Rev. J. M. Gibson—now the Rev. Dr. Gibson, of London, England—to be colleague and successor to Dr. Taylor, and who coming among us with youthful activity, and ardent zeal, labored in the Gospel, and proved himself to be a worthy helper to our venerable pastor, and proved instrumental in urging on all departments of our Christian work. He went in and out among us with great acceptance ; we parted with him with great regret, after enjoying his ministrations for about ten years, but we are pleased to hear from time to time of his successful labours in the great metropolis of the world.

As regards the labours of his successor, our present pastor, I need not say much, as it is apparent to you all. His labours among you speak for themselves. He came to us at a trying time, and a yet greater trial was near at hand, for in less than two years after his induction, our beloved and venerable pastor was called suddenly away from tending his flock to the "rest that remaineth for the people of God." Our loss was his gain, but we miss him still in the Session, in the congregation, and in the community.

But when we consider all these things, we would be ungrateful did not our hearts expand, and our hands open, when we compare our present with our past history. To-day, many who in those days were in humble circumstances, are now in prosperous and comfortable positions. We now occupy a commanding position, not only in this city, but in the church at large. Let us use these privileges aright, and seek with might and main to advance

the cause of God throughout the world, and on this happy jubilee occasion consecrate an offering to the Lord of that wherewith He hath blessed us.

In conclusion, I would earnestly appeal to the young people of the congregation to come forward and take the places of those who have borne the burden and heat of the day, and who, from increasing age and infirmities, must necessarily soon leave their places to be filled by others, of these there are not a few. The Church looks to you to take the places "of the fathers and become noble princes in the land." Are you preparing for the work? It will not do to shirk your responsibility. It is cheering to find that some recognize the fact, and have stepped into the breaches, but many more are needed. There is room for all in Christ's vineyard; and to those who comply and become fellow-workers with God, there is "glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life." Come, for the Lord hath need of you.



Address by Andrew Robertson, Esq.

MR. CHAIRMAN, MEMBERS, ADHERENTS, AND FRIENDS OF
ERSKINE CHURCH :

Youth anticipates the future with hope and joy, middle age generally finds enough to do in the present, old age lives in, and recalls the past ; the latter is our case to-night, in what we have heard from the respected gentlemen who have preceded me.

I heard you, Mr. Chairman, at a meeting of the congregation, held lately, indulge in some remarks on the past history of the church, that made me think you were beginning to feel that even you were no longer young, perhaps the more so, because I had shortly before received a letter from an old and valued friend, in which he indulged in the recollections of the past. It is so quaintly written that I shall read an extract from it. After some personal allusions, he thus moralizes :—

“ ‘ It is better to be wise than to be rich ; it is better to be good than to be wise, and it is better to live more for the good of others than for yourself.’ Words of the wise man. After all, we can only leave footprints on the sands, too true, to be often, and soon, obliterated in time, still living in the great enduring eternity. ‘Fai too Fait,’ is a motto of universal application to we sons of toil. What a narrow thing is life, all the more need to use it well. You see I have fallen to moralizing ; no wonder, for I write in bed, having been laid up for a week, and in my solitary musings you came o’er my spirit. So you see you are not quite forgotten—out of sight, out of mind. No, I have still a warm side to many in Montreal—friends of forty years’ standing. Ah, me ! Since I saw you I have seen much. Bad times, bad debts, bad weather, and bad harvests. Things are mending.

When are you coming over again? It would do you good. I wish I could come to you, but am 'thirld.' This will reach you near the end of the year; may the next be prosperous for you and yours. I wish you every good wish from the short present to the great "unlimited."

To-night I am privileged to give my recollections of the past. In doing so, I feel that I am no longer young. Just thirty years ago this very night, I landed in the city of Montreal. The 30th day of that year was a Saturday, and on Sunday, 1st May, 1853, I entered the old church in Lagauchetiere street. What memories in connection with the congregation crowd on me during that long period of time, not only of the work done, but of the workers with whom it was my good fortune to be associated.

When I joined the church, in 1853, our annual revenue for all purposes was about \$2,000 a year. We were in debt, and had hard work to make both ends meet, and we had no Missionary Society. In 1855 Dr. Taylor tried to collect for missionary purposes by subscriptions and collections, but the total amount up to, and including 1856, only came to \$714, or an average for the five years of \$143. In 1860 a Missionary Society was established, and that year alone, no less than \$873 was collected, being six times the previous annual average. In 1861 our first Annual Report was printed, and from them I find that our annual income for congregational purposes for that and two succeeding years averaged only \$2,272, while our Missionary and Benevolent collections had increased to \$1,500 per annum.

In April, 1864, Dr. Taylor was laid up, and became so ill that he felt it necessary to tender his resignation. After some negotiations, it was agreed that he should have a colleague, but it was found that our church, on Lagauchetiere street, would require to be enlarged, so as to get the revenue necessary to maintain the minister and his colleague. It was found impossible to get additional land there. It was proposed by some that we should sell our church and buy Cote Street Church, as it was feared that we would not be able to build a new one. To this proposal I

strongly objected, and with my valued friends, Messrs. Brown and King, we were enabled to show that we could obtain the means to build a new one. In a few days we had \$18,000 promised for the purpose ; and, having got this length, the question of site then came up. At that time Knox and the American Churches had secured sites on Dorchester street, and not to interfere with them, we had to go farther, up to St. Catherine street. We then had choice of four sites—one on St. Catherine street, near Alexander street, one opposite the Cathedral, one on Cathcart street, immediately behind the latter, and the one which we ultimately decided on, and where we now are. At first it was looked on with little favour. It was said to be too far away ; it was in a swamp ; it would be impossible to reach it ; a creek ran past it, and my venerable friend, Dr. Taylor, almost laughed me out of countenance for proposing such a site. He, however, lived long enough to admit to me that my judgment was correct. At that time, nineteen years ago, I got a plan of the city prepared, which showed that a majority of four members were living nearer the present site than the old site of Lagauchetiere street. I also pointed out that we had for years been walking to meet the rising sun, and it was just as easy to walk towards the setting one for a few years. These and other arguments carried the day, and here we are. I was then in hope that a decade would enable us to free the church from debt, but it was otherwise willed. The organ question came up at that time. There had been no deliverance from the Assembly of the church, as to the right of congregations to introduce the organ. The question was, therefore, necessarily delayed. Many of the members of the congregation in favor of the organ then left and joined other congregations where the organ was allowed, thereby weakening our congregation in future voting for the organ, and delaying its introduction. The latter, at that time, was to me a matter of little consequence, although I was, for good reasons, ultimately forced to assist in obtaining its introduction. During that year the Assembly, at its meeting, gave congregations permission to introduce the organ, and in September the question was again raised, resulting in a vote in favor of the organ. This was bitterly

opposed by the minority, and the matter was delayed for another year, when the vote was again taken, showing such a decided majority as enabled those in authority to go on and put in the organ. Our debt at that time was about \$7,000; the organ and alterations required about ten thousand more. This put us back again, but now it is satisfactory to be able to say with pardonable pride, that we are a congregation free of debt, and that we can now write on our banner, in this respect, "*Nolli Secundus.*"

Now let me go back again to 1864. After we had decided to build the church, we had to find a colleague, and Dr. Taylor was instructed to write to Dr. Robson, Dr. McFarlane, and Dr. John Ker, in Glasgow, to see if they could induce any suitable person to make a three months trip to Canada to visit us, thus to give the congregation a chance of hearing them before a call was decided upon. Dr. Taylor either did not understand what was agreed upon, or exceeded his instructions, as I found out by a friend of mine writing out to me, making inquiries as to the church, cost of living, and other necessary enquiries, and stating that the committee had asked him to go out and take the charge. I at once wrote back to him that they had not been empowered to do that, and that I could not advise him to come, except he was simply coming for a trip, which might eventually culminate in a call. Dr. Ker was, I think, shown this communication, which made him write me a letter on the subject, in which he clearly set forth that it would be impossible to carry out our views, but suggested that we should do what we could in Canada, and mentioned the name of a likely and clever young man whom he had met, and thought well of, Mr. John Munroe Gibson, who was then assisting the Rev. Dr. Ormiston, in Hamilton. The hint was taken; Mr. Gibson was invited to preach two or three Sabbaths. He came, and having the pleasure of his company at my house while in Montreal, I formed a very high opinion of his character and abilities, which his career has since fully established.

He was unanimously called, accepted the call, and I need scarcely say that the ten years he was with us he was universally respected and esteemed, not only by his own congregation, but by

all to whom he was known in Montreal, and that he left us to our great regret.

This night also marks an epoch in this church's history. We are entering on the eighteenth year in this building. On the last Sabbath of April, seventeen years ago, this church was formally opened; but what a change this seventeen years has made in the *personell* of the congregation, and what results have grown from the change of situation. Seventeen years is about one-third of the life of the congregation. Let us look at its history for the first thirty-three years, and we find that for its ordinary and building expenditure it did not reach \$70,000, and for its missionary and benevolent purposes, for the same time, did not reach \$10,000, or \$80,000 for all purposes, or about \$2,400 a year.

During the seventeen years we have been here, we have raised for congregational purposes about \$100,000; for our building \$55,000, and have given to missionary and benevolent purposes about \$110,000, or \$265,000 in all, an average of over \$15,500 per annum. I shall not enter into the details, as on an occasion of this kind general statements are best, besides, my time is limited, and while we can point with no little pride to the past, we must not forget the future of the congregation. Fifty years has passed, and our Jubilee has come. When the Centennial gathering is held, who will be there? Perhaps some now present may see that day, but the greater number of those now hearing me will have gone to the great "unlimited." Many of those who are now young will also have gone before, but even of those who are now young and active workers, will, if spared, be like those of us who are now leading the van, and nearing the time when they will be forced to cross that river from which no traveller returns.

At a social meeting of the congregation held about a year ago, I heard some remarks made by one of the elders of the congregation as to each member remaining loyal to his church. At that time, nor even now, do I take blame to myself, even although I do not now take that active interest in the management of the

church that I did in former years, but I am sure that no one who knows me will for a moment think that I can ever be anything but loyal to Erskine Church ; but if there be, let me say to them, that I can never forget the many warm friends that I have made and lost in the congregation—perhaps I should rather say not lost, but gone before. I cannot forget that eight of my children are registered on its baptismal roll, nor that in course of time, and of their own accord, six of them became members in full communion ; nor can I forget that more than once in the history of my family I have walked down these aisles to the joyful notes of the wedding march. How can I ever forget that great and good man, whose tablet is set in yonder corner ; a man who was my counsellor and friend for nearly a quarter of a century, and one with whom I never had an unkind word—the late Rev. Dr. Taylor ; and above and beyond all, I can never forget that at my request, and at almost a moment's notice, he left his seaside resort to accompany and give that consolation, he was so well able to bestow, to the sorrowing parents and distressed husband, as they journeyed from the sea with the mortal remains of one whose name he had registered on the baptismal, communion and marriage rolls of this congregation, and whose last official act was to see it inscribed on the last roll—the roll of death, and when dust had been laid in dust, and the last sad rites had been performed. Can I ever efface from my memory my parting from him, apparently well and hopeful, at the Bonaventure Station, trusting again to see each other shortly ; alas, to be obliged within one short month, with other members of the congregation, to go to the same station to bring his remains, and reverently place them on the spot where I now stand. But I must forbear ; I think I have said enough to show that I can never be otherwise than loyal to Erskine Church. Now that my short story of the past is told, let me call your attention to the present, and take a peep into the future. What are we as a congregation to-day ? A congregation free of debt—a congregation well organized, a congregation respected, and pointed to by others, even of other denominations, as an example worthy of imitation. Shall we stand still ? I unhesitatingly answer : No. When I look around me and see the many faces

that are now before me, young, bright, and intelligent, not a few of whom have already become worthy successors to their parents in church work, I have no fear for the future of Erskine Church in Montreal. We old men can, therefore, leave it with confidence in your hands ; but let me say to you young men and women, that the "race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong ; and to young and old, that the present only is ours, the future is to us unknown." Therefore,

" Trust no future howe'er pleasant ;
 Let the dead past bury its dead ;
 Act ! Act in the living present,
 Heart within and God o'erhead.

" Art is long, and time is fleeting,
 And our hearts, though stout and brave,
 Still, like muffled drums are beating
 Funeral marches to the grave.

" Let us then be up and doing—
 With a heart for any fate—
 Still achieving, still pursuing,
 Learn to labor and to wait."



ERSKINE CHURCH, ST. CATHERINE STREET,
ERECTED 1865.